

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend paragraph [0006] as follows:

[0006] The invention, with respect to the task of providing a process for laser beam welding with reduced formation of end craters, comprises moving a laser beam along a segment to be welded to form a weld seam having an end, and as the laser beam approaches the seam end, distancing the focus of the laser beam from the surface to be welded, wherein at least one of (a) the welding speed is reduced towards the seam end, and (b) at the seam end a local beam movement occurs sideways beyond the seam ~~is set forth in the characterizing portion of Patent Claims 1 and 3. The remaining claims define advantageous embodiments and further developments of the inventive process (Patent Claims 2 and 4 through 11).~~

Between paragraph [0024] and [0025] insert the header and paragraph [0024a] as follows:

**Brief Description of the Drawings**

[0024a] The invention is further illustrated in the drawing, wherein:

- Fig. 1(a) illustrates the process of laser welding at four intervals moving from left to right;
- Fig. 1(b) schematically illustrates defocusing as the focus of the laser beam is distanced from the weld;
- Fig. 1(c) graphically shows reduction in speed as the laser beam approaches the seam end;

Fig. 1(d)-(e) show lateral movement of the beam as the laser beam approaches the seam end; and  
Fig. 1(f) graphically shows reduction in speed as the laser beam approaches the seam end.